

# Boyle's Law: Pressure-Volume Relationship in Gases

The primary objective of this experiment is to determine the relationship between the pressure and volume of a confined gas. The gas we use will be air, and it will be confined in a syringe connected to a Gas Pressure Sensor (see Figure 1). When the volume of the syringe is changed by moving the piston, a change occurs in the pressure exerted by the confined gas. This pressure change will be monitored using a Gas Pressure Sensor. It is assumed that temperature will be constant throughout the experiment. Pressure and volume data pairs will be collected during this experiment and then analyzed. From the data and graph, you should be able to determine what kind of mathematical relationship exists between the pressure and volume of the confined gas. Historically, this relationship was first established by Robert Boyle in 1662 and has since been known as Boyle's law.

## OBJECTIVES

In this experiment, you will

- Use a Gas Pressure Sensor and a gas syringe to measure the pressure of an air sample at several different volumes.
- Determine the relationship between pressure and volume of the gas.
- Describe the relationship between gas pressure and volume in a mathematical equation.
- Use the results to predict the pressure at other volumes.

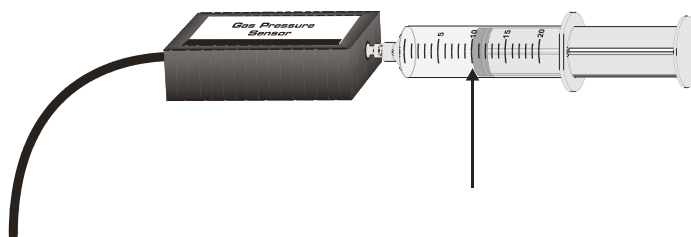


Figure 1

## MATERIALS

computer  
Vernier computer interface  
LoggerPro

Vernier Gas Pressure Sensor  
20 mL gas syringe

## PROCEDURE

1. Prepare the Gas Pressure Sensor and an air sample for data collection.
  - a. Plug the Gas Pressure Sensor into Channel 1 of the computer interface.
  - b. With the 20 mL syringe disconnected from the Gas Pressure Sensor, move the piston of the syringe until the front edge of the inside black ring (indicated by the arrow in Figure 2) is positioned at the 10.0 mL mark.
  - c. Attach the 20 mL syringe to the valve of the Gas Pressure Sensor.

## Experiment 6

2. Prepare the computer for data collection by opening the file “06 Boyle’s Law” from the *Chemistry with Computers* folder of *LoggerPro*.
3. To obtain the best data possible, you will need to correct the volume readings from the syringe. Look at the syringe; its scale reports its own internal volume. However, that volume is not the total volume of trapped air in your system since there is a little bit of space inside the pressure sensor.

To account for the extra volume in the system, you will need to add 0.8 mL to your syringe readings. For example, with a 5.0 mL syringe volume, the total volume would be 5.8 mL. *It is this total volume that you will need for the analysis.*

4. Click  to begin data collection.
5. Collect the pressure vs. volume data. It is best for one person to take care of the gas syringe and for another to operate the computer.
  - a. Move the piston to position the front edge of the inside black ring (see Figure 2) at the 5.0 mL line on the syringe. Hold the piston firmly in this position until the pressure value stabilizes.

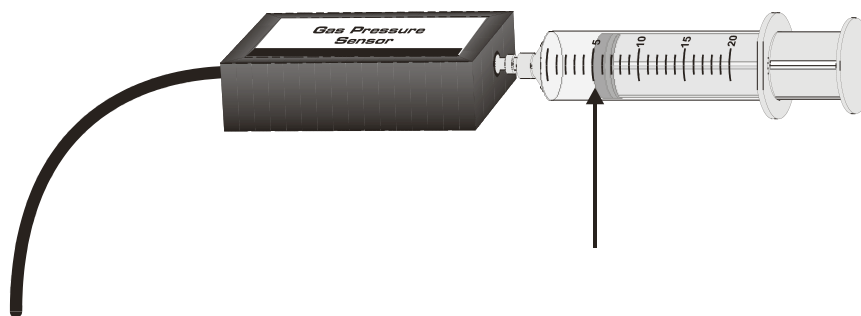


Figure 2

- b. When the pressure reading has stabilized, click . (The person holding the syringe can relax after  is clicked.) Type in the total gas volume (in this case, 5.8 mL) in the edit box. Remember, you are adding 0.8 mL to the volume of the syringe for the total volume. Press the ENTER key to keep this data pair. Note: You can choose to redo a point by pressing the ESC key (after clicking  but before entering a value).
  - c. Move the piston to the 7.0 mL line. When the pressure reading has stabilized, click  and type in the total volume, 7.8 mL.
  - d. Continue this procedure for syringe volumes of 9.0, 11.0, 13.0, 15.0, 17.0, and 19.0 mL.
  - e. Click  when you have finished collecting data.
6. In your data table, record the pressure and volume data pairs displayed in the table (or, if directed by your instructor, print a copy of the table).
  7. Examine the graph of pressure vs. volume. Based on this graph, decide what kind of mathematical relationship you think exists between these two variables, direct or inverse. To see if you made the right choice:
    - a. Click the Curve Fit button,
    - b. Choose Variable Power ( $y = Ax^n$ ) from the list at the lower left. Enter the power value,  $n$ , in the Power edit box that represents the relationship shown in the graph (e.g., type “1” if direct, “-1” if inverse). Click .

- c. A best-fit curve will be displayed on the graph. If you made the correct choice, the curve should match up well with the points. If the curve does not match up well, try a different exponent and click  again. When the curve has a good fit with the data points, then click .
8. Once you have confirmed that the graph represents either a direct or inverse relationship, print a copy of the graph, with the graph of pressure vs. volume and its best-fit curve displayed.
9. With the best-fit curve still displayed, proceed directly to the Processing the Data section.

## DATA AND CALCULATIONS

Volume (mL)	Pressure (kPa)	Constant, $k$ ( $P/V$ or $P \cdot V$ )

## PROCESSING THE DATA


1. With the best-fit curve still displayed, choose Interpolate from the Analyze menu. A vertical cursor now appears on the graph. The cursor's volume and pressure coordinates are displayed in the floating box. Move the cursor along the regression line until the volume value is 5.0 mL. Note the corresponding pressure value. Now move the cursor until the volume value is doubled (10.0 mL). What does your data show happens to the pressure when the volume is *doubled*? Show the pressure values in your answer.
2. Using the same technique as in Question 1, what does your data show happens to the pressure if the volume is *halved* from 20.0 mL to 10.0 mL? Show the pressure values in your answer.
3. Using the same technique as in Question 1, what does your data show happens to the pressure if the volume is *tripled* from 5.0 mL to 15.0 mL? Show the pressure values in your answer.
4. From your answers to the first three questions *and* the shape of the curve in the plot of pressure vs. volume, do you think the relationship between the pressure and volume of a confined gas is direct or inverse? Explain your answer.
5. Based on your data, what would you expect the pressure to be if the volume of the syringe was increased to 40.0 mL? Explain or show work to support your answer.

## Experiment 6

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- Based on your data, what would you expect the pressure to be if the volume of the syringe was decreased to 2.5 mL? Explain or show work to support your answer.
- What experimental factors are assumed to be constant in this experiment?
- One way to determine if a relationship is inverse or direct is to find a proportionality constant,  $k$ , from the data. If this relationship is direct,  $k = P/V$ . If it is inverse,  $k = P \cdot V$ . Based on your answer to Question 4, choose one of these formulas and calculate  $k$  for the seven ordered pairs in your data table (divide or multiply the  $P$  and  $V$  values). Show the answers in the third column of the Data and Calculations table.
- How *constant* were the values for  $k$  you obtained in Question 8? Good data may show some minor variation, but the values for  $k$  should be relatively constant.
- Using  $P$ ,  $V$ , and  $k$ , write an equation representing Boyle's law. Write a verbal statement that correctly expresses Boyle's law.

## EXTENSION

- To confirm the type of relationship that exists between pressure and volume, a graph of pressure versus the *reciprocal of volume* ( $1/\text{volume}$  or  $\text{volume}^{-1}$ ) may also be plotted. To do this using *LoggerPro*, it is necessary to create a new column of data, reciprocal of volume, based on your original volume data.
  - Remove the Curve Fit box from the graph by clicking on its upper-left corner.
  - Choose New Calculated Column from the Data menu.
  - Enter "1/Volume" as the Name, "1/V" as the Short Name, and "1/mL" as the Unit. Enter the correct formula for the column ( $1/\text{volume}$ ) into the Equation edit box. To do this, type in "1" and "/". Then select "Volume" from the Variables list. In the Equation edit box, you should now see displayed:  $1/\text{"Volume"}$ . Click .
  - Click on the horizontal-axis label, select "1/Volume" to be displayed on the horizontal axis.
- Decide if the new relationship is direct or inverse and change the formula in the Fit menu accordingly.
  - Click the Curve Fit button, .
  - Choose Variable Power from the list at the lower left. Enter the value of the power in the edit box that represents the relationship shown in the graph (e.g., type "1" if direct, "-1" if inverse). Click .
  - A best-fit curve will be displayed on the graph. If you made the correct choice, the curve should match up well with the points. If the curve does not match up well, try a different exponent and click  again. When the curve has a good fit with the data points, then click .
- If the relationship between  $P$  and  $V$  is an inverse relationship, the plot of  $P$  vs.  $1/V$  should be direct; that is, the curve should be linear and pass through (or near) your data points. Examine your graph to see if this is true for your data.
- Print a copy of the graph.